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Work / Life

Top 10 Keys for Discovering the Leader Within

NAVIGATOR

Many people are born leaders, yet the ability to lead is actually an art and an amazing collection of skills that can be learned and sharpened through a series of daily habits and activities. The following top 10 steps will guide you to discovering the leader within and to growing each and every day in amazing ways—personally, professionally, and spiritually.

1. Spend 30 minutes each day considering your depth of character.

Your depth of character is key to determining your success as a leader. It is easy for us to say that we are “in integrity,” but your actions are the real indicators of strength of character. Spend 30 minutes each morning looking at the major areas of your life: career, marriage, family, community, and spirituality. Write down any instances where you see “cracks” (you have cut corners, something is inconsistent, you have not kept your word, you have been dishonest, etc.) Do all in your power to repair those cracks by apologizing and dealing with the consequences of your actions. After facing up to past actions, begin a plan that will rebuild you and prevent you from making further mistakes.

2. Be dedicated to a high level of learning.

Great leaders are highly competent because they are dedicated to a high level of learning, growth, and improvement. Spend 15 to 30 minutes each day devoted to learning something new. Do not settle for knowing “how” to do something. Dig deeper by asking the question “why”—and then go find the answer.

Search the Internet, interview an expert, or take a day trip to find the answer to a question that is on your mind or the minds of those who follow you.

3. Follow a regular exercise routine.

One of the most practical habits you can develop is a regular exercise routine. There is no question that regular exercise has many benefits. The most energetic people with whom we come in contact all exercise. They look better, feel better, and always seem to have time to do what they want. There are numerous studies that document the value of health. Just read any of the bulletins from the American Heart Association. And many leaders that we have spoken with have told us that solutions to challenges have revealed themselves while the leaders were exercising.

4. Discover your strengths.

The strengths profile finder from the book *NOW! Discover Your Strengths* by Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D., is a revolutionary program that can show you how to discover and then develop your unique talents and gifts. One of the secrets to discovering your leadership potential lies in your ability to exercise your strengths, not in dwelling on your weaknesses. This tool by Buckingham and Clifton can guide you to becoming a high-performing and empowered individual.

5. Tap into your creativity.

Many adults move through life thinking “I am not creative,” and wondering “What if?” As

humans, we all have the ability to be wildly creative, and sometimes, this requires practice. By spending time each day with the support of tools such as “Five Star Mind” by Tom Wujec, you can begin to unlock and expand the creative potential that lies deep within you. Using puzzles, mind-mapping, word association, and the power of curiosity, you can stimulate your intuition, innovation, and creative expression. As Napoleon Hill stated, “All the ‘breaks’ you need in life wait within your imagination. Imagination is the workshop of your mind, capable of turning mind-energy into accomplishment and wealth.” As your creativity soars, you will find that others will view you as a leader and will be attracted to you for your amazing ability to be innovative.

6. Be willing to interrupt your thought patterns.

In his latest bestseller *The Breakout Principle*, Herbert Benson, M.D., a Harvard cardiologist, describes a four-stage process in which new insights and peak experiences are achieved. According to Benson and his researchers, the first stage is when there is a crisis or a problem that you are attempting to solve. What is important in the second stage is to interrupt your thought pattern by breaking away from your predicament and doing something totally different. You might leave the building and take a walk, go to the gym, or listen to some music. It is during this second phase, the interrupting of your routine, that the peak experiences occur.

7. Start or join a Mastermind Group.

Did you know that Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, Henry Ford, and Harvey Firestone were all members of a Mastermind Group? This group of leaders knew something many of us do not know. They knew that the key to their success was in their ability to rely on each other for feedback, ideas, accountability, and above all . . . support! These men controlled much of the industry of the United States during the height of their careers. Innovation and expansion in human thought often result from teams that mentally capitalize on the principle of collaborative thinking. With spontaneous expression and interchange of thoughts with folks who are up to big things in life, a Mastermind Group can shift your awareness, expand your thinking, and take you to unprecedented levels of leadership.

8. Don't be a one-trick pony.

If you spend all your time and energy working, you limit your understanding of yourself and of people in general. When that happens, you will find it difficult to connect and you will not be very engaging. Have an open mind and develop interests and hobbies. Be involved in your community. Develop the ability to talk about subjects other than your work. Become a complete person.

9. Develop the ability to fully express yourself and be a better communicator.

Have you ever had a meeting or encounter with someone and, as soon as it was over, said to yourself, "Why didn't I say that?" If you haven't had that experience, you are unique. The ability to express ourselves is an essential tool in our ability to create impact. Develop this skill. Be aware of what you are really feeling in the particular moment so that you do not make agreements you do not intend to keep. You might want to consider joining Toastmasters or Speaking Circles to fine-tune your ability to speak on your feet.

10. Embrace change.

Change happens every day. Prepare to adapt to what is happening. Have you ever noticed how rapidly children change and we as adults try to put the brakes on change? Studies show that the average person has at least five different careers. Change can lead to innovation and can be exciting. Ask yourself what is possible. Ask yourself, "What can I create?" Prepare yourself for change. Try something like yoga. It makes your mind more flexible and as a result, you look at life differently.

(Source: Copyright 2000–2003 CoachVille, LLC)

WEB SITE PICKS

<http://freetraveltips.com/>

It's almost the weekend, and if you're about to hit the road or the skies, this is the site to check first. It's filled with travel tips about everything from booking a cruise to planning rest stops on a car trip. No matter what kind of traveler you are, this site has some tips and tricks that you'll find helpful.

One of the most helpful is the checklists. These will help you with everything in the time leading up to your trip. Lots of the things on the list are essential to helping you enjoy your time traveling—things like getting birth certificates in order, ensuring that someone will be able to take care of your pets, and packing last-minute snacks to grab for energy and health. You can even learn better ways to pack to fit more items and not get wrinkles.

When the tide of life surrounds you and the water upsets your boat, don't waste your tears on what might have been, just lie on your back and float.

—Author Unknown

INSPIRATION

Paradise

Just could this be paradise right here where you are?
Nirvana within you
not somewhere afar?

Tho' some would decry it
and say it can't be
just follow along
if you long to be free.

Your life's what you make it—
your choices each day
the thoughts that you harbor
and words that you say
determine the status
of your life today.

So if you want more
than you think you have now
watch closely your mindset
and you'll find out how.

Just live in the present.
Think only the best
about yourself first
and then all the rest
of your brothers and sisters—
you'll find that you're blest

and really in paradise.
It's all in your mind.
Whatever you look for
is just what you'll find.

—Larry Brophy

HUMOR

Who's on First?

ABBOTT: Super Duper computer store. Can I help you?

COSTELLO: Thanks. I'm setting up an office in my den, and I'm thinking about buying a computer.

ABBOTT: Mac?

COSTELLO: No, the name's Lou.

ABBOTT: Your computer?

COSTELLO: I don't own a computer. I want to buy one.

ABBOTT: Mac?

COSTELLO: I told you, my name's Lou.

ABBOTT: What about Windows?

COSTELLO: Why? Will it get stuffy in here?

ABBOTT: Do you want a computer with Windows?

COSTELLO: I don't know. What will I see when I look in the windows?

ABBOTT: Wallpaper.

COSTELLO: Never mind the windows. I need a computer and software.

ABBOTT: Software for Windows?

COSTELLO: No. On the computer! I need something I can use to write proposals, track expenses, and run my business. What have you got?

ABBOTT: Office.

COSTELLO: Yeah, for my office. Can you recommend anything?

ABBOTT: I just did.

COSTELLO: You just did what?

ABBOTT: Recommend something.

COSTELLO: You recommended something?

ABBOTT: Yes.

COSTELLO: For my office?

ABBOTT: Yes.

COSTELLO: OK, what did you recommend for my office?

ABBOTT: Office.

COSTELLO: Yes, for my Office!

ABBOTT: I recommend Office with Windows.

COSTELLO: I already have an office, and it has windows! OK, let's just say, I'm sitting at my computer and I want to type a proposal. What do I need?

ABBOTT: Word.

COSTELLO: What word?

ABBOTT: Word in Office.

COSTELLO: The only word in office is office.

ABBOTT: The Word in Office for Windows.

COSTELLO: Which word in office for windows?

ABBOTT: The Word you get when you click the blue “w.”

COSTELLO: I'm going to click your blue w if you don't start with some straight answers. OK, forget that. Can I watch movies on the Internet?

ABBOTT: Yes, you want Real One.

COSTELLO: Maybe a real one, maybe a cartoon. What I watch is none of your business. Just tell me what I need!

ABBOTT: Real One.

COSTELLO: If it's a long movie I also want to see reel two, three, and four. Can I watch them?

ABBOTT: Of course.

COSTELLO: Great, with what?

ABBOTT: Real One.

COSTELLO: OK, I'm at my computer and I want to watch a movie. What do I do?

ABBOTT: You click the blue 1.

COSTELLO: I click the blue one what?

ABBOTT: The blue 1.

COSTELLO: Is that different from the blue w?

ABBOTT: The blue 1 is Real One, and the blue w is Word.

COSTELLO: What word?

ABBOTT: The Word in Office for Windows.

COSTELLO: But there's three words in office for windows!

ABBOTT: No, just one. But it's the most popular Word in the world.

COSTELLO: It is?

ABBOTT: Yes, but to be fair, there aren't many other Words left. It pretty much wiped out all the other Words out there.

COSTELLO: And that word is real one?

ABBOTT: Real One has nothing to do with Word. Real One isn't even part of Office.

COSTELLO: Stop! Don't start that again. What about financial bookkeeping, you have anything I can track my money with?

ABBOTT: Money.

COSTELLO: That's right. What do you have?

ABBOTT: Money.

COSTELLO: I need money to track my money?

ABBOTT: It comes bundled with your computer.

COSTELLO: What's bundled to my computer?

ABBOTT: Money.

COSTELLO: Money comes with my computer?

ABBOTT: Yes. No extra charge.

COSTELLO: I get a bundle of money with my computer? How much?

ABBOTT: One copy.

COSTELLO: Isn't it illegal to copy money?

ABBOTT: Microsoft gave us a license to copy Money.

COSTELLO: They can give you a license to copy Money?

ABBOTT: Why not, they own it.

HEALTHY FOOD TIP

Avocados Against Osteoarthritis

Avocados may reduce the inflammatory condition that causes pain in osteoarthritis.

Osteoarthritis is a common, chronic, and painful condition. It is the most common of all rheumatic disorders and is destined to become one of the most prevalent and costly diseases in our society. Simple analgesics and NSAIDs provide little help and have an adverse safety profile, whereas natural remedies are widely available and well tolerated.

Compounds in avocados have been shown to inhibit the cartilage degradation that occurs in osteoarthritis and may even promote cartilage repair.

Additional measures to reduce the pain of osteoarthritis include acupuncture, devil's claw, capsaicin, velvet antler, and SAME.

(Sources: *Journal of Rheumatology* 2003;30(8):1825-34; *Clinical Journal of Pain* 2004;20(1):13-8; *Drugs and Aging*. 2003;20(7):517-26. Excerpted by Betty Kamen, Ph.D., and Michael Rosenbaum, M.D., at <http://www.bettykamen.com>)

“If you want to shrink something, you must first allow it to expand. If you want to get rid of something, you must first allow it to flourish. If you want to take something, you must first allow it to be given. This is called the subtle perception of the way things are.”
—Tao Te Ching, Translated by Stephen Mitchell

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Did You Ever Wonder?

Who was the first person to look at a cow and say, “I think I'll squeeze these dangly things here, and drink whatever comes out”?

Who was the first one who thought that the white thing that came from a hen's butt looked edible?

Why do toasters always have a setting that burns the toast to a horrible crisp which no decent human being would eat?

If Jimmy cracks corn and no one cares, why is there a song about him?

Can a hearse carrying a corpse drive in the carpool lane?

If the professor on Gilligan's Island can make a radio out of coconut, why can't he fix a hole in a boat?

If Wile E. Coyote had enough money to buy all that Acme crap, why didn't he just buy dinner?

If corn oil is made from corn, and vegetable oil is made from vegetables, then what is baby oil made from?

Did you ever notice that when you blow in a dog's face, he gets mad at you, but when you take him on a car ride, he sticks his head out the window?

Why is it that when someone tells you that there are over a billion stars in the universe, you believe them, but if they tell you there is wet paint somewhere, you have to touch it to make sure?

WORDS OF WISDOM

Three Steps to Increasing Your Inner Peace by Suzanne Zoglio

1. Take Mini-Retreats

If your life is insanely busy, but you're not content, it's possible that you've gotten stuck in a rut of activity that's not aligned with what you really want. It's time to stop and take stock. Plan a month of mini-retreats: a 1-hour walk in the park, a Saturday morning of silent reflection, 20 minutes alone before you go to bed. Then use each one to address a few questions. What's working? What's not? How do you feel? What moments in your day do you feel most alive? What do you miss that you used to love? What do you wish you could have more of? Focus only on one or two questions each “retreat” and commit your thoughts to writing.

Make the last note of each retreat a commitment to the time and date of your next session. Once you've taken stock of where you are and where you want to go, you'll feel a surge of focus and energy. In a month of listening to your

inner voice, you'll make more conscious choices about how to invest your time, money, and energy. As you bring your outer behavior into alignment with your inner desires, the chaos will fade and inner peace will rise.

2. Let Go of the Past

If you feel distressed about moving forward, you're probably hanging on to some baggage from the past. It might be time to make room for what you really want. Old mindsets like, "I can't," "Life isn't that easy," "It's selfish," "I'm not good enough," or "I might need it someday" can keep you stuck in your comfort zone, even when your heart says, "Go for it." Jot down any blocking phrases that might be causing inner conflict. When one appears, simply note it, and replace it with an affirmation such as "I can," "Life is a delight," "It feels great to share my gifts," "I'm loveable and capable," or "I have all that I need." Now you're changing your mind chatter to empowering thoughts instead of disabling ones.

Also, consider cleaning out a closet, the attic, or garage. Recycle all your I-might-need-it-someday stuff and see how free you feel.

Next, clear out old hurts. Take a stack of index cards, and on each one write down the name of anyone who has ever hurt, betrayed, or annoyed you in some way. Put the cards in three piles from your weakest emotional reaction (slight) to a moderate reaction, to your strongest reaction (still really mad). Starting with the slightest reactions, see if there are any that you could just decide to forgive and let go. If so, rip up the card as a ritual of letting it go once and for all. Next, sort out any that you never really expressed your annoyance about. Write that person (you don't have to actually mail the letter), just express yourself, and then if you want to, forgive and let the incident go. Finally, sort out any hurts that need further action (a meeting, prayer, therapy, meditation). Try releasing (or at least diminishing) one grievance a week.

3. Make Each Day Count

We generally feel at peace when we are proud of ourselves and when we are being the person we aspire to be. If we are living our own dreams, growing wiser each day, and making a difference in a loving way, we will sleep well. To stay on target, try adding two rituals to your day: Morning Intent and Evening Acknowledgment. When you awaken each morning, practice Morning Intent. Before you get out of bed, take 5 minutes to formulate your intent for the day. Decide three things: 1. Which personal trait do you want to "grow" today (patience, humor, compassion, good listening, loyalty, courage)? 2. What top three tasks do you intend to accomplish today? 3. Where will you make a difference in someone's life today? Just before you go to sleep each night, practice Evening Acknowledgment. Reflect on three things:

1. What moments in your day were you the person you aspire to be? 2. What did you learn today, perhaps from mistakes? 3. What blessings, large and small, are you grateful for today?

(Source: Suzanne Zoglio, consultant, national speaker, and author of *Recharge in Minutes and Create a Life That Tickles Your Soul* (named "Outstanding Book of the Year" and "Most Life-Changing" in the Independent Publisher Book Awards 2000). Web site: <http://www.zoglio.com>)

FOR REFLECTION

Buddha on Handling Criticism

A man met him on the street one day and began to call him mean and ugly names. Buddha listened quietly and thoughtfully until the man ran out of epithets and had to pause for breath.

"If you offer something to a man and he refuses it, to whom does it belong?" asked Buddha.

The spiteful man replied, "It belongs, I suppose, to the one who offered it."

Then Buddha said, "The abuse and vile names you offer me, I refuse to accept."

The man turned and walked away.

"Everything is either an opportunity to grow or an obstacle to keep you from growing. You get to choose."

—Dr. Wayne Dyer

HOME HINT

Tips and Hints to Keep Whites White

Commercial Bleaches

It is best to avoid most commonly available bleach, sodium hypochlorite, a moderately toxic chlorine salt that can bond with other chemicals to form cancer-causing organochlorines in the wastewater system.

Natural Oxygen-Safe Bleaches

These are commercially available (found primarily in the health food store marketplace), and are based on hydrogen peroxide. The best choice is to buy commercial nonchlorine bleaches instead of making your own version using store-bought 3 percent hydrogen peroxide because commercial brands include oxygen bleach stabilizers to help reduce the product's reactivity in the environment.

Tip: Adding 1/2 cup of lemon juice to the rinse cycle of a medium load of whites will lightly bleach the clothing. This technique is especially effective on clothes that are then hung to dry on the line.

Soften Your Water

The minerals in hard water can gray clothes. If you have very hard water, add 1/2 cup of vinegar to your rinse water.

Brighten Whites

To brighten whites, and if you don't have hard water, use the might of minerals in your wash cycle. Add 1/2 cup of Borax or washing soda (both are available in the laundry section of your supermarket) to a medium load of laundry.

About Light

Read clothing labels, as some direct you to dry the clothes outside of direct sunlight. On the other hand, storing whites in the dark can cause yellowing. A rule of thumb is that natural fibers love the sun, and hanging them outside to dry on the line is to their benefit.

(Source: by Annie Berthold-Bond, *Care2.com*. Producer, Green Living Channels.)

FINANCES

Higher Standard Deductions

Year-end tax planning for married couples may be affected by the 2003 tax law, which raised the standard deduction to \$9,500 this year from \$7,850 in 2002. As a result, many couples will be better off taking the standard deduction rather than itemizing. (Couples filing jointly should take the standard deduction if their itemized deductions are less than \$9,500 in 2003.)

If you're in that category, you should reverse the standard year-end strategy of accelerating deductible expenses into the current year. Instead, defer paying expenses such as state taxes, mortgage interest, and charitable donations into 2004. Next year, the total of your itemized deductions might be great enough to make itemizing worthwhile.

Following this strategy in alternate years can keep you from wasting deductible expenses. Similarly, if your tax pro says that you'll owe the alternative minimum tax (AMT) this year, you should not prepay state taxes or investment expenses at year-end, because you'll waste otherwise deductible outlays.

(Source: *Retirement & Financial Planning Report* published by *FEDweek*. www.fedweek.com)

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An online version of this newsletter may be found at <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/codec/cc/navig-3.pdf>